

## **Charting Personal Greatness in 2012 and Beyond**

**By Mwangi Wanjumbi (For Newtimes E-Newsletter Readers) - 12th January 2012**

The New Year 2012 presents a new beginning for some recently acquired followers. The same most of whom are in the X and Y generations intend to venture into greatness even if it means relocating elsewhere, especially in the newly discovered life hosting planet. Understandably, they are longing for a new environment where they can be recognized for choosing to become great in their own ways.

You too can join them. It does not matter your situation in life. It does not matter that you were not born into greatness. Not even that you are not in any leadership position either in your employment or in the society. Whatever the situation, you can choose to become great and finally a leader in the new situation.

Most often, I have been training leadership in organizations, with a view to helping staff to appreciate and apply leadership concepts, skills and attitudes in the conduct of their routine work. Naturally, the more senior organizational employees acquire new habits of using their positions to practice leadership.

Conversely, those without respective positions gain skills of legitimately influencing their way to the top as well. On the whole, the beneficially organizations are able to grow organizational leadership skills, which naturally help them to counter the forces of competition from informed positions.

With the new developments, individuals who are not necessarily associated with organizations will acquire the much desirable and inevitable skills and attitudes of venturing into greatness. This is understandable especially in light of the fact that many people have treated personal greatness and eventual leadership as abstract things, therefore not appreciating their relevance to daily lives.

Further, the processes embrace personal values as one of the greatest set of drivers. These values are said to be largely acquired during initial growth. It is therefore assumed (perhaps wrongly) that those who did not acquire the values earlier on have lost it out in personal greatness and eventual leadership. Will that hold true in the new circumstances?

Values are the norms and believe systems that guide our behavior in the different situations in life. So, our value systems form the societal or organizational culture depending on the circumstances. That is why every organization or group of people anywhere has different culture or behaviors. In organizations, the culture is entirely dependent on the behavior of the people making it up. Thus, if the values have not measured up to desirable standards, will they be moderated?

As would be expected, culture is dynamic. It keeps on responding to changes in the environment and influences around us. That is why it may be a misconception to imagine that only the value systems acquired during the growth process make us who we are. Yes, they actually do, but again, they do change and can therefore be moderated to suit changing circumstances.

Consider, people who embrace different religions after, which their lives change dramatically. Consider also people who join different social clubs and end up changing their habits permanently. Figure out organizations that through learning, transform into greatness from earlier mediocrity. This will be the spirit in the new destination.

In a nutshell, deciding that one cannot change for this or that excuse is a mindset, which may not be very helpful in any way, especially in the new world. How then can one acquire invaluable personal greatness and leadership skills capable of bringing change and progress especially in the new set up?

There will be numerous steps involved in this, whose implementation will require determination, courage and resilience. Perhaps it will be best to start with self understanding. This is about whom exactly we are and what we are good at. More appropriately, we will need to understand our purposes in life which is guided by our unique abilities that are propelled by personal orientations or even talents.

Nobody is born without a personal purpose in life. All that we need to do is to discover and develop the same for the improvement of the welfare of humanity. That particular attribute will distinguish us from each other.

Secondly, we will each decide the values that are likely to propel us into desired happiness. The same are natural like the air that we breathe. One only needs to make the right choices. Foremost of all of them is the value of integrity. It is about being truthful to own self and those we closely interact with. It is about being honest and dependable. Will each of us be trusted to keep promises? Shall we be trusted to selflessly care for the interests of others, organizations and even societal structures in the new arrangements?

Author John C Maxwell says that integrity accounts for 71% of all the attributes necessary to make one a great leader. Apparently, the more focused the choices are, the higher the chances are of influencing other members of the society.

Thirdly, it will be necessary to identify the societal needs that will appropriately be served by our unique strengths. Like polished marketers, we will focus towards helping people, organizations and the society in general to meet their needs. Obviously, the beneficiaries will be ready and willing to pay handsomely, especially when the interventions are seen to be impacting positively to their lives.

Fourthly, we will make sure that our choices of vocations and careers meant for serving the society and humanity in general are guided by long term and at best lifelong goals. The same will enable us to be consistently motivated. Only then shall we be passionate in what we do for a whole lifetime. Actually, we are likely to be economically active throughout our time in this new life.

The four guides are important foundations of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will easily help each of us to venture into greatness. Ideally, none of us came to this world to struggle endlessly. Indeed, we only need to struggle towards achieving greatness in our chosen careers or vocations.

Eventually, we will even be entrusted and elevated from personal or informal leadership to formal leadership positions. After all, we were meant to serve humanity to the best of our ability and be rewarded handsomely for the same. Welcome to greatness and therefore leadership mindset 2012. But, do I sense some doubts in some would be followers?

Sydney Sheldon is one of the greatest fiction writers that the world produced in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. It is not clear what the author was doing prior to 1974. This is the year that he produced his first book at the age of 58 years. Since then, he continued writing one masterpiece after the other. Even at old age Sydney Sheldon wrote his last novel at age 89, just before succumbing to a bout of pneumonia. If you still doubt your potential of venturing into greatness in 2012 and beyond, only through propulsion by your own strengths and natural gifts, just consult your inner self once more.

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